

Seabirds:

1. We conducted the annual chinstrap penguin nest census on November 30, approximately one week after the peak clutch initiation date. We counted 4,339 nests, 8% higher than last year's count of 4,026 nests but 25% lower than the previous 12-year-mean of 5,797 nests.
2. We conducted the annual gentoo penguin nest census on December 5, approximately one week after the peak clutch initiation date. We counted 802 nests, down 9% from last year's count of 879 nests. It is also 2% lower than the previous 12-year mean of 818 nests.
3. On December 5, we weighed and measured eggs from a sample of 50 chinstrap penguin nests. Mean egg masses were slightly lower than the previous 12-year mean.
4. In the week since gentoo penguin peak clutch initiation all 50 of the reproduction study plots are incubating partial or full clutches. In the week since chinstrap penguin peak clutch initiation 91% of the reproduction study nests are incubating partial or full clutches and 9% have failed.
5. We continue to monitor known-age penguins. To date, 24 known-aged gentoo penguins are incubating partial or full clutches. There was an error in reporting the number of nests of known age chinstrap penguins. Currently 66 known aged chinstrap penguins have initiated clutches not 75. Of the 66 known-aged chinstraps that have initiated clutches 76% continue to incubate partial or full clutches and 24% have failed.
6. We continue to monitor brown skua territories for nesting activity. Two pairs of brown skuas now have eggs and two other pairs have been observed copulating.

Pinnipeds:

7. We still have two elephant seal pups suckling but we expect them to wean soon.
8. At the last census of fur seal study beaches on 6 Dec we recorded a total of 715 adult females and 648 pups (630 live and 18 cumulative dead). If pup production is similar to last year then we estimate the median date of pupping to be at least three maybe four days later than last year.
9. We began fur seal captures for attendance and foraging behavior on 2 December. As of yesterday, 6 December, we have completed 14 of 30 captures we have planned for CCAMLR trip duration protocol. All females have been captured within 0-1 day postpartum.
10. Our VHF receiving stations (2) are recording and we downloaded our first data from them. Thus far only one of the females we have instrumented have departed on her first trip to sea. This is earlier than usual. The female that has already begun her foraging cycles only had a six-day first visit, a shorter visit than usual.
11. Thus far only 46.4% (89/192) of our tagged female population have returned to Cape Shirreff. The natality rate for returned females thus far is 86.5%. One of our returning females is 26 years old. She is the oldest female we have ever recorded at Cape Shirreff.



12. To date we have seen 40 fur seals that were tagged as pups in previous years (58% of these have been 9-year-olds from the 1999/00 cohort).
13. At the last weekly Cape-wide phocid census on 5 Dec we counted 216 elephant seals and 21 Weddell seals. No leopard seals have been observed in the last three weeks.
14. On 5 December we observed an entangled juvenile male elephant seal. The entanglement was a plastic packing band around his neck. It is rare to see any entanglement on pinnipeds at the Cape but if we do it usually on fur seals. We successfully removed the packing band with a boat hook.

Weather:

15. This week the weather was generally mild with exception of the big storm last Sunday. Mean wind speed was 11.8 mph with maximum wind gust of 54.0mph. Winds were mostly east, west or south all week. The mean temperature for the week was colder than for the last two weeks at 0.0° C. The high temperature for the week was 8.3° C and the low was -2.4° C. Total precipitation this week was 0.5 inches. Sunrise and sunset are now 03:03 and 22:37. Mean solar radiation this week was 16,057 watts per sq. meter.

Camp:

16. On 1 Dec we had a visit by the Brazilian ship, R/V *Ary Rongel*. They dropped off Carolina Bonin, a Scripps Institute of Oceanography Ph.D. student working on pinniped genetics. No visitors came ashore and the ship was only off-shore for a couple hours. Carolina is the sixth member of our team. Everyone are excited to have her and very grateful to the Brazilian program and the captain and crew of the R/V *Ary Rongel*.
17. The seabird and pinniped research is in full swing and has kept us all very busy with collecting and entering data. Camp is running smoothly but we spend most of our day out on the Cape monitoring our study sites.
18. Last year at this time we reported that we had not seen a single iceberg since arriving and that the Cape was nearly snow free. This year we are still seeing icebergs and the Cape is entirely covered by snow. All of the fur seal breeding beaches are still covered in snow.
19. We continue to see an occasional fishing vessel off the Cape.

Submitted by AMLR staff currently residing at the Cape Shirreff field station, Livingston Island.

